

with disabilities who return to work. The "Work Incentives Improvement Act" also modernizes the vocational rehabilitation system by creating a "ticket" that enables an SSI or SSDI beneficiary to go to either a public or private provider of vocational rehabilitation.

In my State of the Union Address, 9 months ago, I urged the Congress to make this historic legislation a top priority, and I fully funded it in the budget I sent to Congress. Like the House, the Senate has overwhelmingly passed the "Work Incentives Improvement Act," thanks to the leadership of Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan. The bill that passed today has flaws. These include limitations on the health options and inadequate and problematic financing provisions, particularly one affecting student loans. I urge the Congress to address these issues this year and send me this legislation. Americans with disabilities who want to work should not have to wait any longer for that opportunity.

Notice—Continuation of Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 19, 1999

On October 21, 1995, by Executive Order 12978, I declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions of significant foreign narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia, and the unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm that they cause in the United States and abroad. The order blocks all property and interests in property of foreign persons listed in an Annex to the order, as well as foreign persons determined to play a significant role in international narcotics trafficking centered in Colombia, to materially assist in, or provide financial or technological support for or goods or services in support of, the narcotics trafficking activities of persons designated in or pursuant to the order, or to be owned or controlled by, or to act for or on behalf of, persons designated in or pursuant to the order. The order also prohibits any

transaction or dealing by United States persons or within the United States in such property or interests in property. Because the activities of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad, the national emergency declared on October 21, 1995, and the measures adopted pursuant thereto to respond to that emergency, must continue in effect beyond October 21, 1999. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency for 1 year with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1999.

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NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 20.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 19, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the

emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond October 21, 1999.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and by depriving them of access to the United States market and financial system.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1999.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Medicare Reform

October 19, 1999

*Dear Mr. Chairman: (Dear Senator
Moynihan:)*

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Senator Moynihan earlier this month to discuss our mutual commitment to strengthening and modernizing Medicare. It continues to be my hope that the Congress will take action this year to, at minimum, make a downpayment on needed reforms of the program. I look forward to working with you toward that end.

In 1997, the Medicare trustees projected that Medicare would become insolvent in 2001. Working together across party lines, the Congress passed and I enacted important reforms that contributed towards extending the life of the Medicare trust fund to 2015. As with any major legislation, the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) included some policies that are flawed or have had unintended consequences that are posing immediate problems to some providers and beneficiaries. In

addition, the program faces the long-term demographic and health care challenges that will inevitably result as the baby-boom generation ages into Medicare. As we worked together in 1997 to address the immediate threat to Medicare, we must work together now to address its short-term and long-term challenges.

Preparing and strengthening Medicare for the next century is and will continue to be a top priority for my Administration. For this reason, I proposed a plan that makes the program more competitive and efficient, modernizes its benefits to include the provision of a long-overdue prescription drug benefit, and dedicates a portion of the surplus to help secure program solvency for at least another 10 years. However, I also share your belief that we need to take prompt action—whether in the context of broader or more limited reforms—to moderate the excessive provider payment reductions in the BBA of 1997. I believe that legislative modifications in this regard should be paid for and should not undermine the solvency of the Medicare trust fund.

You have requested a summary of the administrative actions that I plan to take to moderate the impact of the BBA. In the letter that you sent to me last Thursday, you also asked about four specific issues related to payment for hospital outpatient departments, managed care, skilled nursing facilities, and disproportionate share hospitals.

Attached is a summary of the over 25 administrative actions that my Administration is currently implementing or will take to address Medicare provider payment issues. The Department of Health and Human Services is taking virtually all the administrative actions possible under the law that have a policy justification, which will accrue to the benefit of hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and other providers.

We are finishing our review of our administrative authority to address the 5.7 percent reduction in hospital outpatient department payments. We believe that the Congressional intent was to not impose an additional reduction in aggregate payments for hospitals and I favor a policy that achieves this goal. The